

# A Glance at the British Newspapers

By AN ENGLISH JOURNALIST

READERS in England are often puzzled when they read the telegrams containing extracts from American newspapers. They know too little of the significance of these papers, of the causes for which they stand at home and abroad, of the extent to which they really represent American public opinion or any large proportion of it. Probably Americans are sometimes puzzled in the same way by the telegrams from London. They must wonder whether the London newspapers are an accurate reflection on British opinion as a whole, just as we speculate whether the New York papers, which are much more quoted in the cables than any other section of the American press, justly represent the Middle West and the South and the Pacific Slope. It may therefore be of interest to American readers to hear something about the standing and opinions of the chief London papers and a word or two about the so-called "provincial" press.

To begin with, there are two or three groups of papers which have grown much more powerful of recent years. There is Lord Northcliffe's group—the "Times," the "Daily Mail," the "Evening News," the "Daily Mirror," and the Sunday "Weekly Dispatch." "Father Fiveheads" some one called him in derision.

A few years ago it would have been thought difficult for the "Times," solemn and dignified, lending a general support to the government of the day, to run in double harness with the sensational, stunt-hunting "Daily Mail." Difficulties there have been. When Mr. G. E. Buckle, the editor of the "Times," not long ago resigned, the reason was that, as an independent editor, he found it impossible to say ditto to what Lord Northcliffe was saying in the "Mail," and Lord Northcliffe was resolved to preach the same gospel in all his several papers. So Mr. Buckle went and Mr. Wickham Steed, a linguist, an expert in the Near East and a fervid champion of the Jugo-Slavs, rules in his place.

Nowadays the "Times," the "Daily Mail" and the other Northcliffe organs harmoniously unite on the single platform of assailing Mr. Lloyd George with every weapon that comes to their hand. In 1916 it was whispered in Fleet Street that Lord Northcliffe had sworn to pull down Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey (as he then was) and in fact he prepared the ground for the attack by which Mr. Lloyd George finally subverted his chief—Asquith.

But what was Mr. George to do with Lord Northcliffe after he came to supreme power? He sent him on a special mission to the United States, partly, it was supposed, to gratify Lord Northcliffe's ambitions, partly lest he should quarrel with him. But the quarrel came, ostensibly over Russian policy but according to Mr. George because Lord Northcliffe had pretensions far beyond his capacities; the suggestion made is that Lord Northcliffe desired to be one of the British plenipotentiaries at the Peace Conference in Paris and has never forgiven Mr. George his failure to appoint him. The attack on Mr. George and his government goes on incessantly. The ground is excellently chosen and skilfully varied. At present the main assault is based on the government's recklessness in finance and its failure in Ireland. Mr. George and the government between them supply so much ground for criticism that Mr. George's attempt to attribute the campaign entirely to the personal animosity of his enemy is not convincing.

At the other political extreme is the Hulton group of newspapers, which are owned by Sir Edward Hulton, best known as an owner of race horses. These papers are printed partly in London and partly in Manchester, which is the home and headquarters of the firm. The "Evening Standard," the "Daily Sketch," the "Illustrated Sunday Herald" and a string of local Manchester papers are the best known of the group. They are little known abroad and have little political influence in their own country, but they are skilfully managed and popular purveyors of news.

The founder of the house, Sir Edward Hulton's father, was at one time a compositor in the employment of the "Manchester Guardian" who saw the possibilities of sporting journalism. The political motto of this group is "Lloyd George, right or wrong"; when all others criticise, it is his faithful friend. It is surmised that Sir Edward Hulton may yet join Lord Northcliffe, Lord Burnham and Lord Beaverbrook among the newspaper peers. At all events he will have worked hard for his reward. In building up his papers he has been fortunate in securing one or two Scottish journalists who are very able organizers and, though no newspaper man himself in the editorial sense, he is able to recognize ability in others.

Lord Burnham's paper is the "Daily Telegraph," the organ of the respectable bourgeoisie. Staid, sober and conservative, it carries consolation into West End drawing-rooms and can be left about the house by the cautious parents without fear lest the morals of their sons and daughters be corrupted by extreme or revolutionary ideas—indeed, one might say by ideas at all, for the "Daily Telegraph" would probably own to a doubt about the harmlessness of "ideas" in themselves. The "Daily Telegraph" may be said to represent the conservatism and the respectability of John Bull.

The "Morning Post," on the other hand, represents him in his least pleasant aspect—aggressive, domineering and acquisitive. The "Morning Post," which one cannot but admire for its independence and the finish of its editorial writing, is our pet "Prussian" newspaper. It stamps and roars and rattles the sabre all the time. It is all for force and plenty of it, for no nonsense about the League of Nations, for plenty of protection for the "interests" and for the necessity of "larning" the Irish that they are toads. At present it girds venomously at Mr. Bonar Law because, it alleges, he has betrayed the Unionist party to Mr. Lloyd George, just as many Liberals declare that Mr. George has betrayed the Liberal party to Mr. Law.

The "Morning Post" thus belongs to the old world and the old diplomacy and it has still a considerable following among those Unionists, in and out of Par-

liament, who do not believe that anything is greatly changed by the war and are all for the fine old system of armaments, Balance of Power and Imperialistic ambitions which has brought the world to its present happy state. The "Morning Post" is owned by a woman, Lady Bathurst, edited by Mr. Gwynne and well served in its leader-columns by Mr. Ian Colvin, its chief political writer.

The penny (formerly halfpenny) papers conduct a great and bitter warfare among themselves. They are the "Daily Mail," the "Daily Express," the "Daily Chronicle" and the "Daily News." Of these the "Daily Express" has made rapid progress of late. It is owned by Lord Beaverbrook, formerly Sir Max Aitken, the Canadian who as Mr. Max Aitken entered the House of Commons as Unionist Member for Ashton-under-Lyne. (He rendered great services to Mr. Lloyd George when he formed his government at the end of 1916 and is believed to have received a peerage as his reward.) Its editor is Mr. Blumenfeld and the whole paper bears more than any other in London the impress of its editor's influence in every department. Of recent months it has distinguished itself by taking a very strong line against intervention in Russia and, together with the "Manchester Guardian," has exerted considerable influence on British policy.

The animating motive of the "Daily Chronicle" is loyalty to Mr. Lloyd George and the Coalition. Toward the end of 1918 the "Chronicle," which was then edited by Mr. Robert Donald, was bought by a group of Lloyd George Liberals, headed by Sir Henry Dalziel, a Scottish Radical M. P. Mr. Donald resigned and since that time the Coalition has had no more faithful supporter except the Hulton press. In respect of Russia the "Chronicle" has gone beyond Mr. Lloyd George, for it has been an ardent supporter of intervention on a large scale. The uniformity of the support given to the Coalition has not increased the prestige of the "Chronicle," for it has subdued the critical faculty rather too successfully. Its editor, Mr. Perris, is the most enterprising and successful news editor in Fleet Street, but his interest is in news rather than politics.

THERE remains the "Daily News," until recently under the able political editorship of Mr. A. G. Gardiner. The "Daily News" was and is a political organ, but in Mr. Gardiner's time it suffered a little, like the weekly "Nation," from the impression which it produced that if Mr. Lloyd George achieved something that would have done credit to the Archangel Gabriel, it would nevertheless have found good reason for condemnation. Mr. George has attacked the "Daily News" as fiercely as the "Times." It is owned principally by the Cadbury family, which furnished the point for Mr. George's characteristically undignified reference to "Cocoa-slop." The "Daily News" represents a very considerable body of independent Liberalism and, considering how slight is the concession which it makes in its leaders to popular prejudices and passions, it carries on a successful propaganda.

Last of the daily papers one should mention the "Daily Herald," the Labor organ. It now claims a circulation of a quarter of a million—a small figure compared with the "Mail's" million and the circulations ranging from half a million to eight or nine hundred

thousand claimed by the other penny papers. But the "Herald" is still in its infancy and it is "carrying on." It would carry on better if it were not quite so violent and extreme in its politics and if it would understand that a political organ, to pursue propaganda successfully, must also have all the marks of a good "news" paper. There is too much propaganda about the "Herald"—the old defect which killed its Labor predecessor, the "Daily Citizen"—too little of news and of the other features which attract the busy reader.

Of Sunday papers it is only necessary to mention here one or two. The best of them is the "Observer," edited by the vehement and lively Mr. Garvin, whose output of words on all political subjects and some others is inexhaustible; he has been accused of giving a lead on a subject of the day in a "terse four-column hint." But the most remarkable of the Sunday papers is probably the "Sunday Pictorial," which has a circulation of two and a quarter million readers. Its owner is Lord Rothermere, brother of Lord Northcliffe, who has lately been conducting a strong economy campaign against the government. But Lord Rothermere is a Liberal and he has taken care to suggest that Mr. Lloyd George may not be so much to blame for financial extravagance as the Unionist colleagues whom he left in charge at home during the long months which he spent at the Paris Conference.

These are the chief London papers, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that they reflect British opinion fairly and fully. For that one must take into account also the principal "provincial" papers. Among them are the "Manchester Guardian," under its wonderful proprietor-editor, Mr. C. P. Scott. He was the only unofficial citizen with whom President Wilson held conference during his visit to England and the "Echo de Paris" recently asserted with chagrin that Mr. Lloyd George took his ideas from the "Guardian's" columns; he himself confessed in a public speech only a few days ago that he had always been a faithful reader of its views. Others are the "Yorkshire Post," published at Leeds, a moderate Conservative organ which always has held faithfully to Free Trade and exerts a great influence throughout Yorkshire; the Liberal "Liverpool Post," which has West Lancashire for its province; the Unionist "Birmingham Post" and the great Scottish organs, the "Glasgow Herald" and the "Scotsman." Those who would know what Britain is thinking must listen to these organs rather than to Fleet Street only, for Fleet Street stands far away from the thoughts and feelings of industrial England and is more likely to be swayed by the moods and passions of the moment.

But as a matter of fact the representative character of any newspaper may easily be exaggerated. Thus in Scotland the "Glasgow Herald" and the "Scotsman" are the two great papers and both are Unionist; how was any one to know from their columns a few years since that the great majority of people in Ireland were Radicals, Home Rulers and Free Traders? Newspapers are only partially representative at any time. They reflect a philosophy or a mood or a standpoint that is held by a section of the people which is now large and now small and often it is difficult and sometimes impossible to say what importance attaches to their representative character. But the more we know of the character and standing of the newspapers whose opinions are quoted to us in the telegrams, the better we shall understand what significance, if any, they really possess and perhaps these notes, however inadequate, will help to an understanding of the position and authority of the chief British papers.

## The Beauty of America's Capitol



This view of Capitol Park, with the Capitol in the background, was taken during Washington's first snowfall of the season.

(C) Press III. Service